How can I tell if my child may be poisoned?

Symptoms range from mild to severe. Anything from learning disabilities, hyperactivity, mild cold symptoms, mental retardation, not being able to sleep or loss of appetite can be some of the symptoms.

The best way to determine if your child may be poisoned is to have your doctor or local health department do a blood test.

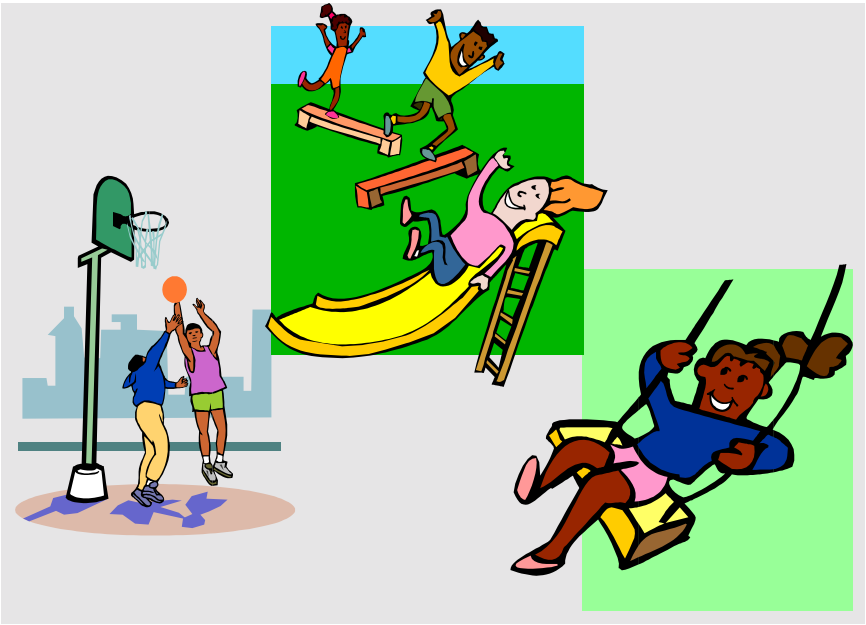
Project Partners:
Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc.
US Environmental Protection Agency
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Funding Provided by:
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Contact Information:
Dave Eustis
Operations Manager
Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc.
406 E. Main Street
Mascoutah, Illinois 62258
618-566-4451
daveeustis@swircd.org

Noemi Emeric
Gateway Regional Team Mgr.
US Environemental Protection
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590
312-886-0995
emeric.noemi@epa.gov

East St. Louis Lead Remediation Project



Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation, formed in 1989, to address regional natural resource concerns, to help find ways to solve regional issues and to assist in the development of the natural resources for the betterment of the community.

Questions about Lead Remediation

What causes lead to be found in community soils?

There are a number of causes of lead in community soils, including paint chips from lead-based paint, accumulated lead from auto-emissions and lead that has been deposited as a result of prior industrial practices. This project will focus on a former industrial site, Western Forge Works, which was located between 16th and 18th Streets, adjacent to St. Clair Avenue.

How do we know that lead is in the soil?

The Illinois Department of Public Health and US Environmental Protection Agency has done testing on this, and several other prior industrial sites, within East St. Louis. Their goal is to identify sites that are in need of remediation, and to then identify programs that will fund the clean-up efforts.

What can we do about lead-contaminated soil?

First and foremost we need to identify the contaminated sites and make certain that children, who are most susceptible to lead poisoning, are kept away from the site. The level of contamination and amount of funds that are available for treatment will dictate the course of action necessary to remediate the site. On this site, our organization will be performing a process called "phytoremediation".

How does the phytoremediation process work?

For several years, scientists have known that there are certain types of plants that can be used to "clean the environment". This process is called "phytoremediation". For this project, we will be mixing a type of compost, called biosolids, with the soil. In addition, we will incorporate common nutrients, such as phosphorous and iron, to assist in the process. This blend of compost and nutrients will form a bond, between the lead that is present, and the soil. Once bonded to the soil, the lead will not be able to leach onto other properties or into the groundwater. Turf grass is then planted on the site to further create a barrier between children and the soil.

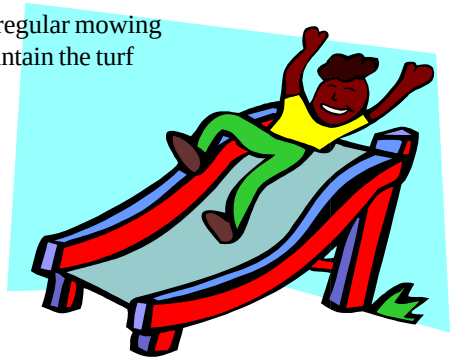
If the lead is still in the soil, how does this process help?

By using this process, lead forms a very tight bond with the soil. Laboratory testing with rats shows that if lead-contaminated soil, that has gone through this process, is ingested by rats, it will pass through their bodies rather than being absorbed by the blood systems.
The addition of the compost and nutrients also creates an excellent environment in which to grow plant material. Once established, turf grass will create a dense barrier between children and the lead.

How will the process be implemented, and how long will it take?

A construction fence will be placed around the site and we will ask for assistance from the community in monitoring the site during the course of the project. Tilling the site and adding the compost/nutrients will only take a few days. Once the materials have been added, grass seed and mulch will be applied to the site. It will take approximately one to two months for the seed to germinate and start to grow, depending on how much rain Mother Nature provides. The fence will be removed once the grass is well established.

Once the project is implemented, regular mowing and fertilizer applications will maintain the turf grass in a healthy condition.



For More Information, Call: (618) 566-4451